



## MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES

*Maryland's Social Services Agency*



### MEDIA RELEASE

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### **FIRST LADY KATIE O'MALLEY AND DHR CELEBRATE FOSTER PARENTS OF THE YEAR**

#### ***Baltimore City DSS honors five families***

**BALTIMORE** – First Lady Katie Curran O'Malley joined the Maryland Department of Human Resources (DHR) to celebrate foster parents selected by their local departments of social services as Foster Parents of the Year. The First Lady hosted an afternoon reception at Government House to honor foster parents. The event was held on Sunday, May 17, 2009.

"I am pleased to help DHR recognize foster parents for playing such a vital role in the lives of children separated from their birth families," said First Lady O'Malley. "That separation can be one of the most traumatic occurrences in a child's life. Caring, committed foster parents provide the sense of security a child needs most during this very difficult time."

"Last night, more than 9,000 children went to sleep some place away from their birth families," said Brenda Donald, Secretary of the Department of Human Resources. "Most children do best in individual family environments, so even when they can not be with their birth families, it is comforting to know that they are with other families who have stepped in."

In recognition of May as Foster Parent Appreciation Month, each of the 24 local departments of social services identified a foster parent that has gone above and beyond to serve children. Those foster parents have earned the title of Foster Parent of the Year from that jurisdiction.

The Baltimore City Department of Social Services selected five families to honor. They include **Demetra Davis**, who has served as a foster mom for 19 years. Ms. Davis has also adopted two children and is currently foster mom to two siblings; **Phillip and Randi Goodwin** have been fostering an 11 year old from their neighborhood. They stepped in and filled a need that existed for this young boy and as a result decided to become foster parents; one of the greatest attributes a foster parent can have is patience, and **Deborah Joseph** has an abundance of that. It is one of the reasons she makes such a wonderful foster parent. Ms. Joseph has been a foster parent since 2002 and currently cares for a three year old; **Theodore and Arnissa Parker** became foster parents in 1998. After caring for their niece and nephew for 8 years and helping them be able to successfully return home, the Parkers decided to foster other children; **Brenda and Wayne Williams** are caring for their two grandsons who

- Martin O'Malley, Governor
- Anthony G. Brown, Lt. Governor
- Brenda Donald, Secretary

are 18 and 2 years old. Having the boys with them has been a rewarding experience and Mr. and Mrs. Williams have seen first hand how important it is that children have a place to feel safe and cared for.

Maryland continues to recruit additional foster parents to be resources for children in care. Those interested are asked to call 1-888- MD-KIDS2 (1-888-635-4372) for more information. In an effort to recruit potential foster parents, the Baltimore City DSS has recently released a series of short videos that highlight current foster parents and foster children sharing information about the positive difference foster care has made. The videos will soon be available on the DHR website at [www.dhr.state.md.us](http://www.dhr.state.md.us) and can be seen on local media outlets serving metropolitan Baltimore.

The 2009 Foster Parents of the Year honorees statewide include:

Allegany County  
**Sue and William Goss**

Frederick County  
**Kirk and Jamie Keel**

Anne Arundel County  
**Alfred and Ellen Long**

Garrett County  
**Glen and Lisa Marsh**

Baltimore City  
**Demetri Davis**

Harford County  
**Bryan and Lisa Marsh**

Baltimore City  
**Phillip and Randi Goodwin**

Howard County  
**Sharon Barr**

Baltimore City  
**Deborah Joseph**

Kent County  
**Helen Nicholson**

Baltimore City  
**Theodore and Arnissa Parker**

Montgomery County  
**Charles and Brenda Carafana**

Baltimore City  
**Wayne and Brenda Williams**

Prince George's County  
**Richard and Aaron Hooks-Wayman**

Baltimore County  
**Nathan and Melissa Rivers**

Queen Anne's County  
**Joyce Jones**

Calvert County  
**Mitchell and Eileen Ray**

St. Mary's County  
**Warren and Teresa Crouch**

Caroline County  
**Dale and Debra Hicks**

Somerset County  
**Michael and Kimberly Strong**

Carroll County  
**Catherine Goldsborough**

Talbot County  
**Richard and Kindel Kimball**

Cecil County  
**Shane and Lisa Southerland**

Washington County  
**Tom and Toni Barnhart**

Charles County  
**Michael and Rhoshon Hayes**

Wicomico County  
**Chadwick and Maria Steward**

Dorchester County  
**Wanda Hill**

Worcester County  
**Sharron Chambers**

The Maryland Department of Human Resources is the state's social service provider. The agency collaborates with 24 local jurisdictions to: provide foster care, adoption and protective services to children; collect and distribute child support payments; and provide temporary cash, food stamps and medical assistance to families. It also administers programs for homeless persons, refugees, migrant workers, victims of crime and women who are displaced, battered or assaulted. Last year, DHR served 638,000 people in need. In terms of its annual budget, DHR is Maryland's fourth largest state agency.